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Josephine Preston Peabody

(MRS. LIONEL MARKS)

HARVEST MOON.

THE WOLF OF GUBBIO: A Comedy in
Three Acts.

THE SINGING MAN.

THE PIPER.

THE BOOK OF THE LITTLE PAST. Illus-
trated in color.

THE SINGING LEAVES.

MARLOWE: A DRAMA.

FORTUNE AND MEN'S EYES.

OLD GREEK FOLK STORIES.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

BOSTON AND NEW YORK

HARVEST MOON

Harvest Moon

By JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY



BOSTON & NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge
1916

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NOTE

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HARVEST MOON

TO
THE WOMEN OF EUROPE





Halt! — Who goes there?

A Woman.

—— *Whence? And where?*

Soldier, I cannot tell. I only know

This dark is still the world.

And I must dare.

Who bade you try?

My man-child here, his cry.

—— *I cannot let you by;*

Woman, I stand on guard.

—— And I.



HARVEST MOON

O VER the twilight field,
Over the glimmering field
And bleeding furrows, with their sodden
yield

Of sheaves that still did writhe,
After the scythe;
The teeming field, and darkly overstrewn
With all the garnered fullness of that noon, —
Two looked upon each other.
One was a Woman, men had called their mother:
And one the Harvest Moon.

And one the Harvest Moon
Who stood, who gazed
On those unquiet gleanings, where they bled;
Till the lone Woman said:

‘But we were crazed . . .
We should laugh now together, I and you;
We two.
You, for your ever dreaming it was worth
A star’s while to look on, and light the earth;
And I, for ever telling to my mind

Glory it was and gladness, to give birth
To human kind.

I gave the breath,— and thought it not amiss,
I gave the breath to men,
For men to slay again ;
Lording it over anguish, all to give
My life, that men might live,
For this.

‘ You will be laughing now, remembering
We called you once Dead World, and barren
thing.

Yes, so we called you then,
You, far more wise
Than to give life to men.’

Over the field that there
Gave back the skies
A scattered upward stare
From sightless eyes,
The furrowed field that lay
Striving awhile, through many a bleeding dune
Of throbbing clay, — but dumb and quiet soon,
She looked ; and went her way,
The Harvest Moon.

CRADLE SONG

I

LORD GABRIEL, wilt thou not rejoice
When at last a little boy's
Cheek lies heavy as a rose,
And his eyelids close?

Gabriel, when that hush may be,
This sweet hand all heedfully
I'll undo, for thee alone,
From his mother's own.

Then the far blue highways paven
With the burning stars of heaven,
He shall gladden with the sweet
Hasting of his feet:—

Feet so brightly bare and cool,
Leaping, as from pool to pool;
From a little laughing boy
Splashing rainbow joy!

Gabriel, wilt thou understand
How to keep his hovering hand?—
Never shut, as in a bond,
From the bright beyond?—

Nay, but though it cling and close
Tightly as a climbing rose,
Clasp it only so, — aright,
Lest his heart take fright.

*(Dormi, dormi, tu.
The dusk is hung with blue.)*

II

Lord Michael, wilt not thou rejoice
When at last a little boy's
Heart, a shut-in murmuring bee,
Turns him unto thee?

Wilt thou heed thine armor well, —
To take his hand from Gabriel,
So his radiant cup of dream
May not spill a gleam?

He will take thy heart in thrall,
Telling o'er thy breastplate, all
Colors, in his bubbling speech,
With his hand to each.

*(Dormi, dormi tu.
Sapphire is the blue ;*

*Pearl and beryl, they are called,
Chrysoprase and emerald,
Sard and amethyst.*

Numbered so, and kissed.)

Ah, but find some angel-word
For thy sharp, subduing sword !
Yea, Lord Michael, make no doubt
He will find it out :

(Dormi, dormi tu !)
His eyes will look at you.

III

Last, a little morning space,
Lead him to that leafy place
Where Our Lady sits awake,
For all mothers' sake.

Bosomed with the Blessèd One,
He shall mind her of her Son,
Once so folded from all harms,
In her shrining arms.

*(In her veil of blue,
Dormi, dormi tu.)*

So ; — and fare thee well.

Softly, — Gabriel . . .

When the first faint red shall come,

Bid the Day-star lead him home,

For the bright world's sake, —

To my heart, awake.

PIETÀ¹

I

YOU men of Antwerp, who have lifted
down
Once more from His high cross, the
Crucified,

And from the hands and feet, and piercèd side
Wiped your own blood, above that anguished
crown ;

There by the belfry-tower that glorified
The upward gaze of Flanders and Brabant,
Men of Namur, Liège, unconquered Ghent,
And leafy fair Ardennes ;

Is it with you again,
As with those far Judæan brother-men
Who saw their glory, and the living Word
Of all men's longing slain and sepulchered ?
His body left, alone,

Unto His own ;
And their despair, wherewith to seal the stone.

¹ Read at a Mass Meeting in Boston for the Belgian Relief
Fund December 1, 1914.

And are your words the broken words they
 had

As once they walked together and were sad,
Along the smouldering, desolated ways?

'Now is it many days

Since all these things were done,

Before the sun.

*And He, the Very God that gave us breath,
Is scourged and put to death.'*

Brothers, it is not true.

By all new-born compassion, now we know
The Lord is risen indeed; and walks with you.

Yes, though your eyes are holden; — yes,
Through all the wilderness;

Through the black desert there,

The waste of rankling embers, where they go
As snowflakes on the air, —

Unknowing whither and unknowing whence, —
The wingless Innocents,

The little children. — And, of all that mourn!
Mothers of trampled sons,

Perishing, helpless ones,

The women, women, broken, bruised and
 spent, —

Dragging a shattered flight to banishment,

Faint with the weight of woe in men unborn!
Homeless, and guiltless; west and west and
north,

Whither the lords of famine drive them forth,
Along the awful footprints trodden red;—
But shepherded
Of Him who had not where to lay His head.

Heroes, He walks with these,
The refugees.

Heroes, He walks with you
Your widening realm made new,
Your kingdom vaster now, than ever then;
Your world-wide empire in the souls of men.

II

And you, New World?
Now that the lightning-blast
Of tangled hates has left your heart aghast,
What is your answering deed
To men at need?

The Eyes, that once their startled eyes could see
Through the blue morning mist of Galilee,
Look on you now, with their one '*Lovest thou
me?*'

IO HARVEST MOON

And with the cry of light that follows death,
'*Thou knowest that we love Thee!*' — sobs all
breath.

And '*Feed my lambs,*' He saith.

Ah, by that word to keep,
By all the sharpness of their more than death,
'With nothing left them but the eyes, to weep,'
Shall we not feed His sheep?

III

Now, with the cold, draws near the holy time,
When there shall sound no chime,
From towers that look alone
On glories overthrown.
There shall no tongue of bell
Proclaim Emmanuel,
To mock with homage thus,
Our God-with-us!

Far on the Syrian plains, the shepherds there
May pipe to moon-lit air
White tidings of the Hope of all men's dream, —
Men yet blaspheme.
O New World, do not mock
The desolation of this perisht flock,

With chime or festival ;
While shames and sorrows call
Above the wind, the scourging, bitter wind,
For those who sinned, —
In that they held the unconquerable gate
Of human hope, against the hordes of hate !

Look on that Mother-Country, face to face ;
Stricken that men might live.
And to her ruin of a manger-place,
Gather, and rally ; — give !
O Fair-of-fortune, Hope and Humbleness,
Gather and garner ! — Bless
Your lowly offerings
Of precious things.

Open your treasure forth, for her ;
Gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

DOMINION

[*To the Invaders*]

LORDS of disaster, waiting still to reap
New glory for the dooms that you have
sown,

New glory for the ruin, stone on stone,
And bleeding tribute wrung from them that
weep;

Great is your faith, above the watch you keep,
Till there shall spring some vintage of your own
Out of the tilth of blood and tears alone,
And trodden breath still crying from the deep!

Yet, lords of famine, one gift late-discerned,
But still a triumph and a dwelling place, —
One master-work of might is surely done.
Only your chosen way could so have earned
The men and brothers of the Belgian race,
Their everlasting stronghold in the Sun.

FULL CIRCLE

[*The Bandage-Makers*]

NOW no longer is it lace
In the golden market-place,
Nor a little twilight street
Where the day-long neighbors meet: —
To and fro, and face to face,
Talk and shuttle, with the lace.

— Long ago, and gray and past!
But they need us now at last;
They are wanting us again,
All our men.

Now it is no longer nets,
Brown above the morning sea; —
Sea no one of us forgets,
Heeding never such as we!
Now no sails to make or mend;
Sails, sails, — ships to send
Out forever, to the end!

Other work and other web
Given to our hands again;

For the flood,
For the ebb,
(Turn and fold, and fold again,)
Drop by drop, of shining blood,
Life-blood that we gave our men.

Well for me, well for you,
Work is ever yet to do;
Web to wear the daylight through;
Work to do!

From his first of swaddling-bands,
In our hands. —
Now he hears, and understands.
All our spinning song complete,
So he have the winding-sheet.

Better so: the one refrain, —
Back to us, to us again!
All our master-building thus,
Back to us.

This to wind, and this to bathe;
Here, to lull with swathe on swathe;
So to staunch, and so to bind
Darkness softly on our blind. —

Hide away the ruin, frayed
From the bodies that we made :
Till that all things be fulfilled ;
All our treasure spent and spilled ;
With the darkening of the sun,
When the last of light is gone.

Kyrié elëison,

Christé elëison !

MILITARY NECESSITY

I SCARIOT, never more thy stricken name
Sound now the blinded deeps of infamy;
Nor thy poor hurried, faltering sin shall be
The world-worn symbol of an utmost shame.
A thousand years, two thousand, still the same
Red gleam of torches, ever there to see
On the gray darkness of Gethsemane! —
Now, newer lights outflare their simple flame.

For you, half-hearted, must limp back to say —
With but one death of Christ to grieve about! —
'Lo, I have sinned, in that I did betray . . .
Innocent blood.'

Now, — weak with no such doubt,
Men write: 'No hate was here. Our chosen way
They chose to bar. —

And they are blotted out.'

DEAD CHIMES

WHERE the night smouldered,
Heaped, stone on stone,
They watched together,
Gods overthrown.

In the black desert,
With smoke for a shroud,
The wounds of their dumbness
Throbbled out, aloud.

One with the throbbing
Of the wounds of Time,
They spoke together;
They that once did chime.

‘I was that strong one,
That joyous lord
Over these valleys,
Where morning poured!
To our high places
My voice over-fills,
There lifted their faces,
All the young hills!

‘I was their tidings;
I, their Great Bell,
Gave them God’s greeting,
Through Gabriel.’

‘At the bidding of Mary,
With my sweet sound,
I blessed the rapt meadows
Kneeling around; —
Now battle-ground,
Now battle-ground!

‘With the voice of my pity
Poured forth as wine,
I folded my City:
It was all mine,
— Mine!

‘Here in my bosom,
Dove and bright dove
Nested them, under
The word of my love.’

*‘And they and their making, the mighty men and
skilled;
Men to dream dreams, and arise then, and build; —*

*Are they all parted? As the sunk sands?
And the mothering women, who spun with their
hands?*

Women wise-hearted?

Women, that knew

*Well to weave twinings; the scarlet of hue,
Purple, and silver and blue?*

*'They and their building; and their precious
things:*

Carven and glorious, with multitude of wings!

Woods sweet of savor, and golden overlaid;

Windows as dayskine for wonder, that they made.

These to be plunder,

And a shattered spoil:—

Incense of their burning, and sanctuary oil,

Treasure of their toil!'—

'Strong men at length,

That swung us to our towers,

Glad men of strength,

They were all ours,

Ours! . . .

Then, nave and spire,

Joy climbed and came.

Then, choir on choir,

Song burst as fire,
Song poured as flame!’

‘And I, that called,
Full of God’s breath,
Words that He saith,
Shall I be thrall’d
To iron death?’

‘I that made glad
The hills round about,—
Shall the tongue of my glory
Now be plucked out?—
That said *All Hail!*
In the one Name,
Be so betrayed?—
Molten, and made
Some tool of shame?’

Where the night smouldered,
Heaped stone on stone,
These spoke together,
Exiles, alone:
Throbbing, even so;
They that one time,
Long while ago,
 . . . Did chime.

MEN HAVE WINGS AT LAST

[*The Air-Raid*]

WOLF, Wolf, — stay-at-home,
Prowler, — scout,
Clanless and castaways,
And ailing with the drought!
Out from your hidings, hither to the call;
Lift up your eyes to the high wind-fall;
Lift up your eyes from the stagnant spring;
Overhead, overhead! The dragon thing,
What should it bring? —
Poising on the wing?’

‘Wolf, wolf, old one, — I saw it, even I;
Yesterday, yesterday, the Thing came by. —
Prowling at the outpost of the last lean wood,
By the gray waste ashes where the minster stood,
And out through the cloister, where the belfry
fronts

The market-place, and the town was, once.
High, high, above the bright wide square,
And the folk all flocking together, unaware,
The thing with the wings came there.

Brother Vulture saw it,
And called me as it passed :
“ *Look and see, look and see,
Men have wings at last !* ”

‘ By the eyeless belfry I saw it, overhead,
Poise like a hawk, — like a storm unshed.
Near the huddled doves there, from a shattered
cote,
I watched too. — And it smote.

‘ Not a threat of thunder, not an armèd man,
Where the fury struck, and the fleet fire ran.
But girl-child, man-child, mothers and their
young,
New-born of woman with milk upon its tongue ;
Nursling where it clung !

‘ Not a talon reached they, then, the lords of
prey !
But left the red dregs there, rent and cast
away ; —
Fled from the spoil there, scattered things
accurst !
It was not for hunger ;
It was not for thirst.

‘From the eyeless belfry,
 Brother Vulture laughed :
 “*This is all we have to see
 For his master-craft ?
 Old ones, — lean ones,
 Never now to fast,
 Men have wings at last !*”’

‘Brought they any tiding for us from the Sun?’
 ‘No, my chief, not one.’
 ‘Left they not a road-mark, how the way was
 won?’
 ‘No, my chief, none.

‘But girl-child, man-child, creature yet unborn,
 Doe and fawn together so, weltering and torn,
 New-born of woman where the flag-stones bled :
 (Better can the vultures do, for the shamèd
 dead !)
 Road-dust, sobbing, where the lightnings burst !
 It was not for hunger ;
 It was not for thirst.’

‘Brought they not some token that the stars
 look on?’
 ‘No, my chief, none.’

‘Never yet a message from the highway over-
head?’

‘Brother, I have said.’

‘Old years, gray years, years of growing things,
We have toiled and kept the watch with our
wonderings,
But to see what thing should be, when that men
had wings.

‘Sea-mark, sea-wall, ships above the tide;
Mine and mole-way under-earth, to have its
hidden pride,
Not enough; not enough; more and more
beside.

‘Bridle for our proud of mane; then the triple
yoke;
Ox-goad and lash again, and bonded fellow-
folk!
Not enough; not enough;—for his master
stroke.

‘Thunder trapped and muttering and led away
for thrall,

Lightnings leashed together then, at his beck
and call ;

Not enough ; not enough, for his wherewithal !

‘ He must look with evil eye
On the spaces of the sky ;
He must scheme and try !
While all we, with dread and awe,
Sheathing and unsheathing claw,
Watch apart, and prophesy
That we never saw. —

‘ Wings, to seek his more-and-more,
Where we knew us blind ;
Wings, to make him conqueror
With his master-mind ;
Wings, that he outwatch, outsoar
Eagle and his kind !

‘ Lo, the dream fulfilled at last ! And the dread
outgrown,
Broken, as a bird’s heart ; fallen, as a stone.
What was he, to make afraid ? —
Hating all that he had made,
Hating all his own !

26 H A R V E S T M O O N

‘ Scatter to your strongholds, till the race is run.
(Doe and fawn together so, soon will it be done.)
Never now, never now, ship without a mast,
In the harbor of the sun, do you make fast !
 But the floods shall cleanse again
 Every blackened trail of men,
 Men with wings, at last ! ’

TO A DOG

SO, back again ?
— And is your errand done,
Unfailing one ?
How quick the gray world, at your morning
look,
Turns wonder-book !
Come in, — O guard and guest :
Come, O you breathless, from a life-long
quest !
Search here my heart ; and if a comfort be,
Ah, comfort me.
You eloquent one, you best
Of all diviners, so to trace
The weather-gleams upon a face ;
With wordless, querying paw,
Adventuring the law !
You shaggy Loveliness,
What call was it ? — What dream beyond a
guess,
Lured you, gray ages back,
From that lone bivouac
Of the wild pack ? —

Was it your need or ours? The calling trail
Of faith that should not fail?
Of hope dim understood? —
That you should follow our poor humanhood,
Only because you would!
To search and circle, — follow and outstrip,
Men and their fellowship;
And keep your heart no less,
Your to-and-fro of hope and wistfulness,
Through all world-weathers and against all
odds!

Can you forgive us, now? —
Your fallen gods?

HERITAGE

*AND if that men should cease from war,
What surety can there be
Of hardihood and sovereignty
And might, so battled for?
Whence shall a master draw his strength
And splendor, if so be, at length,
The strong man cease from war?’*

Oh, he might some day light his mind
With fires that glowed when he lay blind;
The watch-fires of all motherkind. —
The ardors that encompassed him
While he lay hid, unmade and dim,
Beleaguered as a bonden thrall,
With her lone body for a wall.
And she, his stronghold of a year
Against the armaments of fear, —
Her arms his wreathèd cherubim,
Fought with the hosts of hell for him,
And smiling in the eyes of Death,
Tore from her heart his gift of breath.

*Yet, ‘Whence shall be their hardihood,
If men forbear to spill men’s blood?’*

30 H A R V E S T M O O N

From her uncounted agony
 Through climbing ages all worn by,
 Could he not learn the way to die,
 Transfigured with some radiant Why?
 From the same wells of hero-stuff,
 He still might draw duress enough
 To dare and suffer, — be, and build;
 Till some far flaming Dream fulfilled,
 Made the loud song in every vein
 Sing triumph to her, for her pain;
 Triumph, of one more glorious way
 Than plunder for a beast of prey;
 Triumph at last, against all odds
 Set up by the indifferent gods!

Man-child, — the starveling without help,
 Less able than a tiger's whelp, —
 Housed only, once, in her embrace,
 Weak bud of the destroying race!
 O fool and blind, and battled for,
 Whose strength is this you spill in war,
 But hers? — Who laughed the stars to scorn,
 When you were born. —

When you were born.

TWO SONGS OF A YEAR

(1914-1915)

I. CHILDREN'S KISSES

SO ; it is nightfall then.
The valley flush
That beckoned home the way for herds
and men,
Is hardly spent.
Down the bright pathway winds, through veils
of hush
And wonderment.
Unuttered yet, the chime
That tells of folding-time ;
Hardly the sun has set.
The trees are sweetly troubled with bright words
From new-alighted birds ;—
And yet, . . .
Here, — round my neck, are come to cling and
twine,
The arms, the folding arms, close, close and
fain,
All mine ! —
I pleaded to, in vain,
I reached for, only to their dimpled scorning,
Down the blue halls of Morning ;

C H I L D R E N ' S K I S S E S 35

In the dark Eden of a blinding kiss.
And lightning heart's-desire, be still at last!
Heart can no more, —
Life can no more,
Than this.

II. THE SANS-FOYER

LOVE, that Love cannot share,
Now turn to air !
And fade to ashes, O my daily bread ;
Save only if you may
So be the stay
Of the un comforted.

Look down, you far-off lights,
From smoke-veiled heights, —
If there be dwelling in our wilderness !
For Love, the Refugee,
No stronghold can there be, —
No shelter more, while these go shelterless.

Love hath no home beside
His own two arms spread wide ; —
The only home, among all walls that are ;
So there may come to cling,
Some yet forlorn thing,
Feeling its way, along the blackened star !

SEA-DIRGE

SEA-BIRD, forever wailing through the
sky,
Sea-bird, forever searching, now let be.
Dash thy wild heart against the light, and die,
For sorrow on the sea.

Night-wind, that all the weeping years of time,
Sang a mad song of horror yet to be,
Now is the hour; let not that wild voice climb
The steep on steep of flaming prophecy.
Night-wind, let be.

Threaten no longer, with that drowning call,
The children, for their little moment stilled !
Now that the moon is turned to blood, and all,
All doom fulfilled.

SEED-TIME

WOMAN of the field, — by the sunset
furrow,
Lone-faring woman, woman at the
plough,
What of the harrow? — there so near their fore-
heads.

Can there be harvest, now?

‘My one Belovèd sowed here his body;
Under the furrows that open so red.
All that come home now, have we for our chil-
dren. —
They will be wanting bread.’

JUNE ROSE

YOU that put forth, warm and unshud-
dering
From the live vine, to breathe another
Spring,

Answering so the query of the air,

Red lips that dare!—

Parted and smiling now,—

This is the selfsame earth where men did plough
And plant; brown earth, and eyeless to foresee
What men could be.

Now the earth knows;

And the torn fields, furrowed to endless shame.

And you are there,

You kiss upon the air,

Without a tear to shed,

Over the million dead;

Nor yet for those

Outnumbering hearts turned ashes with their
dead.

Earth to earth,

Ashes to ashes,

Dust to dust. . . .

Oh, is it all the same then, to a rose?

That you dare be red?

ALL SOULS' EVE¹

MOTHER, my Mother, Mother-
Country,
Where is the window with the
light?

Wounded I come; groping I come,
Over a blackness, and a blight!

*'Hush you, hush you, my darling;
Question no more of the light.
Morning and evening were the first long day;
And now is the midmost night.'*

'Mother, my Mother, Mother-Country,
Why does the red, red ooze
Brim through my field where the brook did
run?
And the blood on thy heart there,—whose?'

¹ On All Souls' Day, November 2d, in many parts of Europe, a portion of bread is left on the cottage table with a lighted candle, to welcome home the souls of the dead who have died during the year.

*'Hush you, hush you, my way-worn;
Heed not to ask me whose.
Thy breath and mine, and the Earth's, are one;
And one is our life we lose.'*

*'Mother, my Mother, Mother-Country,
Yet were the fields in bud.
And the harvest, when shall it rise again
Up through the fire and flood?'*

*'Wonder not, wonder not, darling;
Grieve not at fire nor at flood.
But when did ever a Mother, yet,
Drink of her children's blood?'*

*'Mother, my Mother, Mother-Country,
Was it not all to save
Harvest of bread? — Harvest of men?
And the bright years, wave on wave?'*

*'Search not, search not, my way-worn;
Search neither weald nor wave.
One is their heavy reaping-time
To the Earth, that is one wide grave.'*

‘ Ah, but my Mother, — Mother-Country,
When shall our triumph be?
Wounded I am, — blinded I am :
This, — is it Victory?’ . . .

‘ *O Man-child of my longing !
Plead with me not ; — let be.
Sleep on, till day. I will ask our way,
Of the stars far off, that see.*

THREE PARTING SONGS

STAR-GAZER

GOLDEN earth,
Now it is time to part,
To you, the new red wine that over-
flows
My dripping heart !

Golden friends,
That starred the long way through,
This the last breath,—in the last kiss,
To you.

Golden star,
Lean down, lean close a moment, and go by ;
Since it was you who bade me all the while,
Live,—sing, and die.

THE GLORIES TO THE DYING

EYES that widen to the light,
Dying eyes, fulfilled of Sight ;

‘ Heart of ebb-tide, ebbing fast,
Do you know us at the last ?

‘ Do you know us, where we bring
All our thwarted offering ? —

‘ In our bright hands overflowing,
All the light there was for knowing,
Garnered to your going ?

‘ Longing, longing from the first,
So to rain upon your thirst ! —

‘ *Life, and could it shew you this
Only with the parting kiss ?*

.

‘ Calling glories of the Sun,
All up-gathered in the one : —

THREE PARTING SONGS 47

‘ Ah, and can you see me now,
Eyes of light? — Fading brow?

‘ Harken, pitiful and dear !
Life it is at last, so near :
Life and all the lights thereof. —
Do you know me? Do you hear?
I was Love.’

*You that take your leave, alone,
Only now to find your own! —
Could Life never tell you this,
Till the parting kiss?*

THE MOMENT

LIFE had said no word to me :
I saw not. But now I see.

For I heard the trumpet call,
*'Live, live, — once for all,
Spend thy golden wherewithal!'*

O I heard the trumpet sing,
'Death, death, where is thy sting?'

And the volley called to me,
'Grave, where is thy victory?'

(Ah, but Mother, — close beside,
Look not as the Crucified,

With your eyes to ask me so,
Child, and did you never know?')

For I heard the trumpet call,
*'Spend thy golden wherewithal!
Live, — give, — Fight and fall!'*
And I flung my all. —

THE NEIGHBORS

THE NEIGHBORS

NOW at the end, neighbor,
Do you not see?
In the gray light of our late awaking,
How even he
Who brought this doom to be,
He too is ours,
And of our making?

We that sat by, neighbor,
We that were still;
That gave our souls to the weaving, the baking;
Veiling our foreheads
Under his will;
Still singing lullaby over heart-breaking.

There in the fields
We ploughed at his need;—
And the bright-sown field of the stars, we left
fallow.

To the small weed
We gave heavy heed;
While the Light pined,
That was ours to hallow!—

Praising, — praising,
His conquering hands;
And his wrath ; and his spoils, at his coming
 and going ! —
The strength of his limb,
As the glory of him ; —
We, the well-knowing.

We that knew well
Of Life, in the giving ;
Costly to build, neighbor ;
Costly with living.
He, from a babe,
Eager for taking
All of the perilous gifts of our making ; —
Swift, — skilled, at the breaking !

Were we not those,
Woman and mother,
Who stripped too well
The thorns from his rose ?
Who gave our all,
Even as he chose, —
Into the widening grasp of his hand ?
Though he be slayer, at last, of his brother,
How should he understand ? . . .

Here, at the end
Of the light of our forsaking,
Is not even he,
Who would be lord,
With the fire and the sword,
Still our man-child? —
Ours, and our making?

We that obeyed, —
Woman and wife!
We that sat dumb;
We that were lowly!
While all the breath and the voices of Life,
All things that are, —
From stubble to star, —
Sang, — *Holy, holy,*
Holy . . .

WOMAN-VIGIL

WOMAN-VIGIL

I

YOU that sleep not, Shadow moving at
midnight,
To and fro, where the windows glimmer
and darken,
To and fro, where you with your ailing treasure,
Lean down to harken :

You that sleep not, Shadow behind the case-
ment,
Toilful Shadow, gaunt from the cup of sorrow;
Humble, ceaseless, shaping late in the midnight,
Bread of to-morrow !

You, wan Shadow, wasting your lighted taper, —
Light of your eyes, at a stitch-by-stitch adorn-
ing;
Starven starlight, paling even as stars do,
Toward the gray morning :

You that keep your watch by the countless
windows,

58 H A R V E S T M O O N

Waking, working, there where they gleam and
 darken,
Even you that over the wide world's breathing,
 Lean down and harken : —

Dark Immortal, — Shadow of mortal woman,
Why awake, when the sentries sleep, and the
 sages ?

Towering Shadow, flung on the dark of night-
 time,
 Dark of the ages ?

*(Loud from the tower
Swung the Bell.
And the sentry called,
'All's well !' . . .
The candle flared
Before the night.
The Shadow trimmed the light.)*

II

What new pride, you of the ceaseless vigil,
Knocks at your heart ? Or what far folly of
 questing
Stirs you now, between the loom and the
 cradle ? —
 Woman unresting !

What vain-longing, — circle and cry of sea-
birds,

Holds your eyes, with the sleepless light beside
you?

All the besieging years, your toil and your
burden,

Who hath denied you?

Who hath said to you, ‘ Rest ; yea, rest for your
portion ’ ?

Who forbade your eyes their watch or their
weeping?

Who withheld the helpless years of the man-
child

From your sole keeping?

Mind of the moon is yours ; her song and her
strangeness :

Singing, spinning, — even as her earth-born
daughters

Spin, and sing ; yet laying her strong command-
ment

Over the waters.

*(The echoes died
Around the hour.*

*Back flew the doves,
Back to the tower.
The house lay dark
In sleep, within.
The Shadow turned, to spin.)*

III

Is it some new thirst, of a shining peril? —
Glorious Death, men sing as they go to greet
him,
Far and far? — But turn you again to your
shelter!

There shall you meet him;

Greet him, speak him fair, O hostess and hand-
maid!

Loitering hearthside guest, what pride should
he kindle?

Face to face with your waiting smile,—and
holding

Flax for the spindle!

Not for men's red harvest, weariless Woman?
Spoils of empire? Triumph of shuddering won-
der? —

You, who fought with vultures over your
treasure,

Yea, for such plunder!

You who shorn your hair by the walls of Car-
thage! —

Gave your haloing hair, but to arm the bow-
men, —

Smiting white through that long-spent storm
of arrows,

Lightnings of omen!

(One by one,

The stars went by;

The Shadow barked

For a cry.

The sentry went,

Whose watch was done.

. . . The Shadow spun.)

IV

Not yet spent, with the night of that endless
travail? —

Sons of men, slaying the sons of mothers!

Not yet spent? For all shed life of your giving?

Yours, not another's.

62 H A R V E S T M O O N

Who but you, to spin of your breath with beauty?
Pluck the light of the stars you fight in their
 courses? —

Light, for the morning-gaze of the torn young
 eyelids,
 Trampled of horses!

Who but you, — to bear the bloom and the
 burden;

Breath and death, and doom of the world, for
 your share?

Breath for men, and men that shall die to-
 morrow; —
 Glory of warfare!

Breath for men; bodies for men, — for women;
Women to breathe and bloom, and bring forth
 in sorrow

Men, — men, to nurture and rear as worship;
 Men for to-morrow!

*(The tide ebbed;
The tide turned;
The wind died;
The taper burned.
The cock crew
That night was done.
. . . The Shadow spun.)*

V

Shadow, Shadow, all the late voices urge thee
Leave thy vigil now for a noon of slumber,
Surely mayst thou shut from thy mothering
eyelids

Griefs without number!

Where the covering darkness lifts from the
housetops,

Baring stark those wretched beyond their tell-
ing, —

Count not thou their wants and their wounds! —
nay, go not

Forth of thy dwelling.

What wilt thou see? — The thousand shames
and hungers;

Old despairs, clinging thy thousand pities!

What wilt thou hear? — Save who must faint
and famish,

Through all thy cities?

The morning-stars

Were laughing all.

The Shadow heard them call.

The darkness called her by her name.

The Shadow rose and came.

*There were the early stars astir,
And one and all they laughed at her.
O sisterwise they sung to her;
Old songs, old words they flung to her,
She knew again, again :
The olden laughter of a star,
From long ago, and far and far !
But all their music and their mirth
Fell, as the little words of earth,
Unto an old refrain : —
Silver laughter and golden scorn,
Across the soothsay of gray morn,
With the smiting of sweet rain.*

VI

‘Spin — spin ! Thou who wert made for spinning !
We are but stars that fade. Thou, thou art human.
Thou, the spinner, — yea, from the far beginning,
 Made to be Woman.
‘Come, come forth, — unto the uttermost borders ;

Forth, where the old despairs and shames implore thee,

Forth of thy small shut house,—where thy dominions

Widen before thee.

‘Spin, — spin! Lift up thy radiant distaff:

Spinner thou art, — yea, from the dim beginning,

Life and the web of all life, and the hosts and their glory; —

Thine was the spinning!

‘Spin, — spin! while that the Three were spinning,

Thou behind them gavest their flax, O Mother;

Thou, the spinner and spun, and the thread that was severed; —

Thou, not another.

‘Spin, — spin! Lift up thy heart with thy spinning;

Look and behold it, shading thine eyes from our laughter; —

Life and the glory of Life and the hosts of the living,

Here and hereafter!

66 H A R V E S T M O O N

‘Fear not, fail not! Let not thy lowliness draw
thee

Back to thy small shut house, O thou too
lowly!

Here, in thy shrining hands the web of thy
glory,

Blinding and holy.

‘Never thine own; not for thy poor posses-
sion, —

Locked in darkness, spent with a dim en-
deavor; —

Life and the web of All Life, and the hosts
of the living,

Now and forever.

‘Rise, come with the sun to the chorusing
vineyards!

We are but stars, that fade. And thou art
human.

Put on thy beautiful garments, O thou Belovèd,
Thou who art Woman.

‘Rise, come! Blow out thy tremulous rush-
light;

Come, where the golden tides give cry of warning.

Over the dark, flooding the world with wonder,
Flows the first morning!

‘Rise, come! Known at last of the nations;—
Even of this dim world thou hadst in thy keep-
ing. —

Thou sole sentinel over the dark of the ages! —
Love, the unsleeping.’

HUNTER'S MOON

BALLAD OF THE BOW-STRING

HUNTER,— Hunter, with the moon-
shaped Bow,
Is it man you wait to slay? Or the
thirsting doe?’

‘ Woman, — strange one, early at the spring,
What is here for your great eyes, in a daily
thing?’

‘ Hunter, — ah, I know!

‘ Morning-dream awoke me, and winged me on
my way;

Morning-dream laid on me a hidden thing to
say :

When I saw thee bend here the great moon-
shapen bow,

And twice and thrice thy fingers plucked the
sinew so,

For its yea or nay!

‘ Taut it was. — It trembled as a netted bird,
Wild for flight, and shuddering through feathers
bright and blurred.

Wild the air fled from it, that spread in echoing
rings,

Till it woke a star far-off, — it woke my heart
to wings,

Hunter, when I heard,

— With its singing Word!

‘Then it was, the Sun strode singing from his
lair,

And bound my sandals on me, and grasped me
by my hair,

And sped me forth to meet thee, lord of them
that prey,

— Sped me forth to meet thee, with one word
to say.

Shall we be no wiser now, than with stone and
sling?

Is this too for blood-shed? — This, the moon-
shaped thing?

And the god within it? — Wilt thou slay or sing?
— Wilt thou slay or sing?

‘Thou lookest on the creatures, from a high
noonday,

With this wonder in thy hand, for thy heart’s
soothsay:

And the hour calls out on thee:

Shall it sing, or slay?

Shall it sing, or slay?'

'Woman, wandering woman, — and sudden as
a fawn,

What is this moon-madness, by the wells of
dawn?

You would bind me with your eyes, that hold
me listening:

Trick and bind my heart of wrath that has made
me king: —

Shall it slay, or sing!' —

'Hunter, never arrow spake as that singing word.
Wounded with the joy of it, all my longings
stirred, —

Stirred and woke, and woke my heart; as a
rescue call

So might burst a captive's bond, to hear his
wherewithal!

Even so, the seeking ships, outstripped by a
bird,

Strain their thews and struggle on, — to sagas
sudden heard,

Of their whitherward!'

‘Woman, weaving mazes of all beyond thy
ken,

When the bright wide earth is mine, with all
its fighting men,

— Shall be singing then !

Mad one, come to stay me here, — riddling
for delay,

Of my weapon that is mine, for my yea and
nay,

Would you rather hear it sing, then, than see
it slay ?

— Turn your eyes away.’

‘Hunter, for the thousand years, do as thou
hast done !

Till the red drops flow, flow down, from the
blinded Sun ;

Till the withered lights drop down, spent, for
thee and me,

And the bright things meet the dark, darkened
utterly ;

Drowned beneath the weeping Dark, under-
neath the sea ;

In the deep on deep of all : —

. . . Tears, tears, maybe.

HUNTER'S MOON 75

'Sun-mad thou with noonday, and thy red
pulse in thee.

Moon-mad I, with anguish of a wonder not to
be!'

— 'What is that to thee?' —

'Hunter, was it nothing? Once to hold in
thrall,

With thy hands, the tortured god, that might
shew thee all? —

For the moment that it sang, — shuddering
for the light,

All my soul was cloven through, pierced with
spears of sight.

'And I saw and heard it. And I saw us twain,
Bright with our own wakened eyes, by this
spring again.

And the golden echoes, flocking, sea-bird wise,
Widening to the sea-rim, — fled with golden
cries;

Sounding forth a glory, from the strand on
strand

Of thy master music, gathered in thy hand:
All the tongues of sooth-say, gathered and set
free,

All the tongues of sooth-say, — flame for thee
and me!

Till the winds crept closer, — the winds, to
understand, —

And the tides to hearken:

And the stars, to see!’

THE HUNTED

COME out of exile, come, come: the
harvest-fields grow gaunt.
The over-lord, he has gone his way.
Lordlier spoil is his to-day.
Beasts of burden and beasts of prey,
Why will you suffer want?

Free of the seas, go free, great-finned: though
the sea be filled with nets.
Free of the air;—for the watcher there, after
strange prey, forgets.

Choose your path as you will, lord ox; for
women follow the plough.
Take your fill, gray wolf, of the flocks. There
are no shepherds now.

They have made them gods out of iron and
blood; and they plough a smouldering
path.
Blind and blinded, they follow now, the eyeless
gods of wrath.

And the shepherding Man who held His heart
for a light in His own two hands,
Houseless as you, an outcast too,—bleeding
and spent He stands;

Bleeding afresh from open wounds, under the
sky, alone;
To warn all souls that yet pass by, of the por-
tion that Love shall own.

For the Hunter, bond to his bitter path, goaded
and yoked, he plods
Under a scourge of knotted lies,—after the
iron gods.

OUTCAST

DAY again. Is he breathing yet,
 Brother? — He hangs there still.
I crept close by, where the cross is
 set,
 Under the broken hill;
And down from his side, the drops ran wet
 Where the spears had done their will.

Who would have guessed that One the
 worst?

 Look you, how deep they lie;
Bodies of men, — bodies of men,
 Over the field hard by:
Only that one nailed up alive,
 For a warning; — slow to die.

Needs must he be a Man to dread.
 But how should he last the day?
With his heart torn wide, and beating red,
 Since the army marched away. —
What if we called him now, to know
 The thing he strove to say?

80 H A R V E S T M O O N

He was the Man of might, be sure,
That they chose this way accurst.
And he breathes : but says no word at all,
Since one I heard, the first :—
Low, but all we could understand ;
In our own tongue. — ‘ *I thirst.*’

SEA-THIRST

*Down to the Sea, — the Sea,
That waits to set men free!*

DOWN to the sea I came.
The sea was all one flame:
The sea, the thousand glories and the
same!

From every wave did run!
A thousand lights — and one,
With rainbow-shattered halos of the sun!

From every light that sprang,
A music rang
Back to the thronging tide, that surged and
sang.

The tides with rapturous lips,
Sang on, — sang on the ships:
The sun-path dipped, in star-sown far eclipse.

O veil of farness, donned,
And shed as any bond,
For veil on veil of beckoning beyond; —

O Sea, that would outstrip
Slow dreams of fellowship,
Beckoning still, beyond the sails that dip !

Wings, wings, forbid it me,
My own should prison me
From that mirage of glimmering prophecy : —

The dearness dim-divined,
Of stranger-kind,
That far horizon calls me on, to find !

Lest I should wall me in
With my near kin ; —
Lead on, — lead on, to where the stars begin.

O sea-path, and sea-fire
To light the far folk nigher,
And thirst, forever one with heart's desire !

Still sing me to the ken
Of singing, sailing men ;
The nearing lights and eyes, — again, again !

With sagas of the foam,
That sing the good ships home
From east and west, to port of spire and dome.

With harbor-lights, that are
As word of star to star,—
The mother-tongue of light, from near to far!

All hail! . . .
Call of the sparkling trail
That bids my heart on, as a lifted sail!

The sail fulfilled of Breath:—
Triumphing sail, that saith,
‘And whither now? And whither now,—
O Death?’

*Down to the Sea,—the Sea,
That waits to set men free!*

HARVEST MOON: 1916

M OON, slow rising, over the trembling
 sea-rim,
Moon of the lifted tides and their
folded burden,
Look, look down. And gather the blinded
oceans,
Moon of compassion.

Come, white Silence, over the one sea pathway:
Pour with hallowing hands on the surge and
 outcry,
Silver flame; and over the famished blackness,
Petals of moonlight.

Once again, the formless void of a world-wreck
Gropes its way through the echoing dark of
 chaos;
Tide on tide, to the calling, lost horizons,—
One in the darkness.

You that veil the light of the all-beholding,
Shed white tidings down to the dooms of
 longing,

HARVEST MOON: 1916 85

Down to the timeless dark; and the sunken
treasures,
One in the darkness.

Touch, and harken, — under that shrouding
silver,
Rise and fall, the heart of the sea and its
legions,
All and one; one with the breath of the death-
less,
Rising and falling.

Touch and waken so, to a far hereafter,
Ebb and flow, the deep, and the dead in their
longing :
Till at last, on the hungering face of the waters,
There shall be Light.



Light of Light, give us to see, for their sake.
Light of Light, grant them eternal peace ;
And let light perpetual shine upon them ;
Light, everlasting.



OFFERING

TO you, poor offering of a lowly cup,
My heart, here lifted up.
To you, and to the undying starlight
shed
From your far-following hearts, O mothers
of the dead.
O lovers of the dead, who died alone
For Life's bright sake!
For men unborn and far-off stranger kin;
Storming the hells of hate, to climb and take
The morning heights unwon, —
Where Life shall have its own;
Where Love shall have its own;
And freemen of all breath shall gather in
The harvest of the Sun.



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